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To

Rev. S. Hopkins Emery

from

the Author.

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Reed

Page 41.

THE THREE VOICES.

THE

THREE VOICES;

OR,

LIGHT AND TRUTH THROUGH A THIN VEIL OF ALLEGORY.

"WHILE I MUSED THE FIRE BURNED."

BY HODGES REED.

REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.

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THE THREE VOICES.

WORKS, WORD, PROVIDENCE.

THE STARS.—THE WAVES.—THE HOLY BOOK.—DISAPPOINTMENT.

Our heavenly Father has three voices for those who live in Christian lands. You could all hear them, if you would only listen. The music which they make is most sweet. Those who have once heard it never forget it. It opens a little chamber of melody in their souls, and, when they hear it in full play, they almost think they

are in heaven. There was a sweet singer in ancient times who was so enraptured with it that he could not contain himself. When he heard the first voice, he exclaimed, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." And then he wrote it down, and called the children together, and taught them how to sing it, while he assisted them on his own harp. "Come, ye children," he used to say, "hearken unto me, and I will teach you." O, he was a sweet singer, and a sweet player, too. Perhaps it is not necessary that I should tell you his name. Do you not know who it was that first sung "The heavens are telling"?

Children, have you ever heard this first

voice of which I have been speaking? All the world might hear it, if their ears were not very dull. Come with me, and look up into the clear, blue sky. What do you see there? "Nothing but the sun; and that is so bright we cannot look upon it." Well, then, come, in the still evening, and gaze at the moon, the queen of night, with all her train of glittering stars. What a splendid sight! If you had never seen it before, would you not exclaim, "O, how beautiful"? Look steadily now, for a good while, away into the blue vault. Forget that you are standing upon the earth — forget every thing around you — forget yourselves. Look and listen, *listen!* Did you hear a voice? "No." Fix your eye upon that star. They call it the north star. Look when you will, you will always find him in the same spot. Hark! Do you not hear a

sound like music a great way off upon the water? What is the burden of its song? This is it:—

"Children, God, the Creator of all worlds, has placed me in the sky to tell you that he is almighty, and good, and faithful."

Hark, now, how all the stars join in the chorus: "Praise the Lord; for he is good. He hangs us up like lamps in the vault of heaven, that you may see his glory."

Did you ever hear the stars sing before? Strange that you have looked upon them so many times and never before heard their voices! Did you think that God would have made so many myriads of bright sentinels, and all dumb, all without tongues, to tell that their Creator is divine? What think you he would do with them, if they should refuse to praise him? Would he not quench their fires, and banish them to

the regions of eternal night? Do you think you can ever again look up into the sky of a clear, still night, without hearing the chorus of the stars? But look around you, children; that voice is not silent upon the earth. Go with me to yonder grove when the gentle winds are playing among the green leaves. Listen there, and you shall hear the trees talk. Then go to the flowery field, and you shall hear the flowers talk. What do they say? "Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of us." Go down to yonder beach: you have been there many a time; but did you ever hear the waves talk? They also have a voice to all who will listen. This is it: "God holds us in the hollow of his hand; he sets our bounds for us, else we should leap over these rugged rocks, and carry *you* away in

our arms — away down to the bottoms of the *mountains*. We are obedient to his command. Every day we come and go at his bidding." The grove, the flowery field, the waving grain, the rolling waves, all tell of God. The heavens and the earth, with one voice, utter forth the praise of their great Creator; and they call on you to unite with them, for you also are his creatures.

Your Father in heaven has, however, another voice for you. If you will put your ear close to that holy book which so often lies upon your table or your shelf, neglected, you shall hear something that ought to make you glad. Although you have had it in your houses so long, perhaps you have never heard it speak, and are inclined to ask me, "What does it say?" Well, if you will go with me to your room, and

open that neglected book, and kneel down, and put your ear close to the sacred page, and listen with all attention, then, if you do not hear it speak, I will tell you what it says. *Listen, now:* —

"To you, O men, I call; my voice is to the sons of men. Come, ye children, hearken unto me. I am God's revealer; I make known his will. I can tell you how man was created in the beginning; how he was placed in an earthly paradise; how he tasted the forbidden fruit, and God was displeased with him, and drove him out of the garden, and cursed the ground for his sake. I can tell you also how the Lord Jesus Christ came down from heaven to atone by his own death on the cross for the sins of a world, thereby opening a way for the forgiveness and salvation of the repenting,

returning sinner. I am come from God to tell you how you may be saved from that dark prison house, where the wicked are, and must be, shut up forever. I come to invite, to entreat, to urge, to command you to seek the Lord while he may be found. I come to sound in your ears the alarm note of impending danger, that you might be induced to escape for your lives. I will teach you many a sweet song to the Savior, how to sing hosannas to the Son of David, and how to strew flowers in the way of his triumphal march."

This, O children, is the voice of the Bible, that blessed book. Did you ever hear it speak so plainly to you before? O, learn to love the sound of its voice.

I said that your heavenly Father had three voices. We have heard two of them;

and now, if you will listen, perhaps you will hear the third. You must listen attentively, or you will not hear it, for this voice is not so loud as the Bible. Perhaps you have sometimes had great expectation, high hopes, that at a certain time you would have a holiday, or receive something which you desired very much. You waited impatiently; the hours passed away slowly, slowly, until the day arrived; and when it came it brought disappointment, and you knew not how to bear it. There was a voice in that disappointment. If you had listened, you might have heard it. It said to you, "Put not your trust in earthly things; they are all uncertain. God fulfils *his* promises — trust in *him*." Perhaps you have been laid upon a sick bed, and there passed many a painful hour. There was

a voice in that suffering. Probably you did not hear it; but it said to you, "God sent me to tell you how easy it is for him to take your strength away; and he has done this lest you should trust in it, and not in him." You may have lost a father or a mother, a brother or a sister, or a companion whom you dearly loved; and you may have stood and looked into their coffin, as the lid was about to be closed; or into their open grave while the sexton was leaning on his spade, waiting for weeping friends to take their last look, and then to hide them away from your sight forever. There was a voice which came from that coffin, a voice from that open grave, — sad, distinct, plain to be heard, — and what was it? "Prepare to die; delay not; for in such an hour as ye think not the dread summons

will come." That same voice may be heard in the whirlwind, when it prostrates the forest and the abodes of men; in the fire, when it breaks over its bounds; in the infection which steals over the earth by night and by day, accompanied by pain, and death, and mourning. It is the voice of Providence. Its language is plain, easy to be understood. A child may know its meaning.

His *works*, his *word*, his *providence* — in these your heavenly Father speaks. These are his *three voices*. O that you all had an ear to hear!

THE LOOKING GLASS.

THE PRETTY FACE. — SABBATH SCHOOL MIRRORS. — THE MINISTER AND THE MIRROR. — THE UGLY FACES. — THE NEW FACE. — THE PLEDGE.

CHILDREN, I am going to tell you about a very great curiosity which we have in our Sabbath school. We call it a *looking glass.* "What!" I hear some little girl say, "looking glasses in the Sabbath school! I never heard of such a thing." Yes, looking glasses; but they are not such as hang up in your parlors and dressing rooms. No; it is a very different thing. The little miss who is proud of her pretty face goes often to her dressing room and looks into her

glass, and grows prouder and prouder; but the fairest and the proudest might look into our Sabbath school mirror and be sadly disappointed and mortified; for it does not reflect the eye, be it ever so sparkling; nor the cheek, be it ever so rosy. If she expects to see her own beautiful face or form in it, she might as well look into the fire. I suppose the maker of it did not intend that any should be proud of their good looks; and so he made his mirror different from all others. But I hear some one say, "I would not give much for a looking glass that I could not see myself in." But I was going to tell you that, although our looking glass does not reflect the face or the form, it does something more — something more marvellous than that; it reflects the disposition, all the good and the bad that lie hid

within. You could not do a wrong thing — lie, or steal, or break the Sabbath, or take God's name in vain, or disobey your parents — you could not have a wrong feeling — anger, pride, vanity, love of the world — but this wonderful mirror would reveal them all in their true size and color. What do you think of such a strange thing as this? How would you like to look into it? If you had one of them hanging up in your dressing room by the side of the one which hangs there now, which would you look into the oftenest?

Well, our teachers have got each of them one of these mirrors; and they carry them into the school every Sabbath, and hold them up before their classes. And they must hold them *just so*, or else the children cannot see themselves at all. Sometimes

the teachers, forgetting what they are about, will hold the back instead of the face towards their scholars; and then any body might know they would not answer any good purpose. I suppose there are a good many forgetful, sleepy, careless teachers in other places. If there are, they must *wake up*, and think what they are about, before they will be fit to handle such a delicate article. And furthermore, it must not be held upside down, or in a slanting or one-sided manner, but *right before the face*, or else it will not bring out the true likeness. It must, as I said, be held *just so*, or it will not do any good. And there is one thing more: some of these glases are put up in very costly frames, with the richest gilding all around the edges; and some in a very plain, cheap, and homely manner; but it

has always been observed that the very cheapest gave as *true a likeness* as the most expensive one. The beggar can have just as good a one as the king.

Now, the children in our school were not very fond of looking into this mirror, although it was such a great curiosity. Perhaps you can imagine what the reason might be. Many a time have I watched the teacher, as he tried to hold it up so as to catch the eyes of his class; but they would look this way, and that way, and every way, rather than where he would have them. And if by chance they caught a glimpse of themselves, they would start as I have seen people when their eyes have been struck by the bright rays of the sun which were reflected from a bit of glass in the hand of a mischievous boy, who kept

himself out of sight. Once upon a Sabbath day, near the beginning of a new year, our minister, who loves children, came into the school, and held this mirror up so that all the scholars might see it, and asked them to promise that they would get one like it, and look into it steadily for a short time, not only on the Sabbath day, but on every other day in the year. "As many," said he, "as will pledge themselves to do this, will rise." Almost all that could read, both scholars and teachers, took the pledge, and I believe that the greater part of them kept it.

Soon after this the teachers became very anxious that they might be enabled to hold up this mirror before their classes just in the way its maker intended; and it was not long before something new and strange

began to show itself. Those boys and girls who a little while ago were so very loath to look in it, were now altogether changed. They spent almost all the time they were in the school in looking at their hearts, their feelings, their faults, as they came out on the surface of the mirror. I said as they *came out*, for all the bad feelings they had ever indulged seemed to stand out right before them; and they appeared larger and larger, and more and more hateful, the longer they looked at them. The little miss of whom I spoke a little while ago, who thought she was so handsome, grew prouder and prouder as she looked in *her* glass; but it was very different with these. They grew more and more dissatisfied with themselves the more they looked in theirs. But methinks I hear some of you say, "We

should not think very much of such a glass as that; the less we looked in it, the better." Alas! some of the dear children in our school thought so too; for after they had looked for a few Sabbaths, and found that they *grew no better, but rather worse*, they turned away their eyes, and could not be persuaded to look in it any more. It did not make them appear any worse than they really were, but so much worse than they expected, that they would fain believe that the fault was in the glass rather than themselves; and so they became angry with it, and would have broken it if they could.

But there were others, who, when they saw how deformed and how vile they were, began to inquire what they must do. They could not bear to think that they must

always look so ugly. They thought they never should take any more comfort, unless they could get a better heart and have better feelings. They were told that they had offended *him* who gave them the mirror; and that he had sent it that they might see how homely, how wicked, they were, in the hope that they might be induced to repent. This they were unwilling to do, and sometimes almost resolved that they never would look in it again; but something kept saying to them that the glass was not to blame, and they ought not to fall out with it for telling them the truth. At length, after many struggles, for they were very proud, and very loath to confess it, they saw that the mirror was given to them in love by one who would make them better if they would hearken to his advice. Then

they repented of all their misconduct — of all their wrong feelings and hard speeches. The next time they looked into their glass, (and it was not long before they did,) *O, what a beautiful face they saw there! so full of love — so full of compassion — so full of gentleness.* It was not their own faces that they saw. No; they had forgotten themselves. *But O, that face!* They could not take off their eyes from it. *What love! what sweetness! what majesty! what glory!* Look! he reaches out his hand. It had been wounded in some desperate conflict. In it was a pledge of mercy. *He speaks! What tones of love, what music, in his voice! O, listen:* —

"Suffer little children to come unto me. I will gather the lambs in my arms, and carry them in my bosom."

Gracious words! Their souls are filled with peace and love, and they go on their way rejoicing. Now they love to look into that mirror which they once slighted, and would fain have others love it too. O, they would not part with it for the world.

But what became of those who turned away? Alas! they are growing worse and worse, and we sometimes fear they will continue to grow more and more deformed, and ugly, and frightful to all eternity. O, what a thought! And all because they hated that friend for telling them the truth.

A CURIOUS TREE.

THE HEALING LEAVES.—THE BLOSSOM.—THE FRUIT.

THE gospel is a tree, tall and fair, with widely-extended branches, bearing fruit in all climates and in all seasons. And its fruit is sweet to the taste, *causing the lips of those who are asleep to speak, and the tongue of the dumb to sing*—yea, more, causing the feet of the lame to run swiftly, and the palsied hand to take hold of high enterprises. It is the tree of life, and highly privileged are they who sit under the shadow of it, and safe are they who eat of its fruits. Its leaves will heal every wound, and make

the broken bones rejoice. Such is the gospel tree. Children, have you ever seen it? Have you ever rested under its shadow? It stands where the *flocks do rest at noon.* Have you ever gathered its blossoms? They are like those of the lily of the valley and the rose of Sharon. You can wear them in your bosoms, and they will not wither or lose their fragrance. Have you ever tasted its fruit? It is abundant — it shadeth like Lebanon. It is better to the sight than fine gold. It is life eternal to those who partake of it. I have said that it was sweet to the taste; it is not only sweet to the taste, and pleasant to the eyes, but it is nourishing — milk to the babe, meat to the man. Whoever eats of it may go upon the strength of it, as did Elijah, forty days, without being hungry. It satisfies, but never cloys.

Have you ever applied its leaves to your wounds? Whatsoever disease you have, these leaves will certainly cure it. No matter if the wound be ever so deadly; no matter if it be hid where the remedies of the world's physicians cannot reach it; one leaf of this tree, if rightly applied, will cure you in a moment. Wonderful cures have been wrought by these healers, almost too wonderful to be believed. It is thought that they healed Job and Hezekiah of their boils, and Naaman of his leprosy, in ancient times, and in later time those who were sick of the palsy and those who were possessed of devils. But they have wrought the most signal cures upon those whose wounds were internal and beyond the reach of the doctors. David once had a wound of this kind, which was

very grievous. It ran in the night, and was so painful that his bed was made to swim in tears. He cried for help, and by these leaves his soul was restored, and he went forth rejoicing, with the cup of salvation in his hands. Saul of Tarsus was wounded, too, and he raved against the Christians and persecuted them, but found no relief until he was struck down by a sunbeam, and then the remedy was applied to his soul. So were the thousands on the day of Pentecost wounded; yet they did not seem to know it until Peter told them of it, and then they quickly cried out, "What shall we do?" Peter gave to each of them a leaf of the gospel tree, with directions how to apply it, and they were healed every one.

Children, I ask you again, Have you seen

this beautiful tree? Have you ever gathered its blossoms? Have you ever tasted its fruit? Have you ever applied its healing leaves to your hidden wounds? For you, too, are wounded, — yes, wounded in the vital part, — and you must die unless you soon obtain relief. Alas! you are wounded unto death, and you know it not. Open your eyes, my young friends, and behold the gospel tree. It blossoms and bears fruit in a day. Its branches are extending their arms over the land and over the sea, and its leaves are for the healing of the nations. Come and sit under its shadow; come and gather its beautiful blossoms; come and taste its delicious fruit; come and apply its healing leaves to your wounds, and be healed, and live forever.

THE ROOT OF BITTERNESS.

THE HEART A GARDEN.—THE THIEF.—VARIOUS KINDS OF ROOTS.

THERE are many roots of bitterness, but they all agree in one thing; and that is, a perfect unlikeness to the gospel tree. None need mistake the one for the other. The gospel tree, as I have told you, is tall, and its branches wide spreading and full of fruit, and the fruit is nourishing, sweet to the taste, and fills all the air with its delightful odors; but the roots of bitterness are stunted, ill favored, crooked, and their fruit is deceitful, promising much, but fulfilling nothing; pleasant to the eye of

sense, agreeable to the fleshly appetite, but poisonous to the spirit, and destructive to the best interests of the soul.

The great husbandman has pointed out these ugly roots to his servants, and commanded them to weed them out of his vineyard, and throw them over the wall, and burn them with fire; but they have gone down so deep into the soil that it seems almost impossible to destroy them entirely. They are like those noxious weeds in your gardens, which, when you try to pull them up, always break off, and leave the extremities, or some of the fibres, deep down in the hard ground. And when you go that way again, a few days after, they are all up again, more flourishing than ever. O, they have such long roots, so many little fibres, so small that they can hardly be seen by

the naked eye; and they are so full of life, too, who shall ever be able to rid his garden of them? Though their tops are cut off by the hoe of the cultivator, though their roots are removed by his spade, yet, if the smallest portion remain in the ground, it would seem as if all the vitality were deposited in *that.* Alas for those who let their gardens run to waste, from year to year, until these roots take full possession, creeping in all directions, clinging to a pebble; here hiding under a rock, there drawing nutriment from hidden springs, so deep down that the gardeners did not know of them! Alas for such! Who shall break up the ground for them? Who shall go down to the dark home of these troublers, and bring them up to the light of the sun, and destroy them, root and branch?

These roots of bitterness, children, what are they? Have you understood it? Are there any of them springing up in your own gardens, in your own hearts? For your hearts are your gardens. Let me give you a word of advice. If you would have your garden clear of these roots, you must attend to it in season — you must look *sharp* after them, and pluck them up the first moment they show their ugly heads. There are some weeds that come up in the field looking so much like the little trees, that the inexperienced tiller can hardly tell the one from the other while they are small. So it is in your garden; therefore you must watch it closely, and if you do, you may tell the difference between one of these roots of bitterness and the gospel tree, even when they first make their appearance.

Do you ask me what I mean by these roots? I will tell you. Suppose you should see a piece of money in a drawer, and something within you should say, "Take it — no matter if it does not belong to you — take it, nobody will see you — nobody will mistrust you — it will buy a great many good things at the stores — take it, quick!" You need not stop to inquire who it was that advised you to do so wicked a thing; it was one of those roots of bitterness. He was a thief from the beginning, and he will make a thief of you, if you do not take care. If one of your associates receives more favors and more praise than you do, and you begin to feel envious, and something within says, "Go and tell some story about her which will make people think less of her," you may know that one

of these ugly roots has got into your garden. His name is *Envy.* He has a very ugly face — pluck him out, or he will make you look just like him. Do your parents sometimes command you to do a thing which you are loath to do, and something within whispers, "Have your own way — no matter if you do not always mind them," depend upon it, the suggestion came from one of *the roots;* his name is *Disobedience.* He is an old offender.

You will meet with these troublers wherever you go — in the house, and in the field, and by the way; and you may always know them by word or by deed. Does that boy quarrel with his fellows, and take the name of God in vain? He is one of the *roots* — avoid him. Does that girl entice you into bad company — does she

speak lightly of the Bible? She also is one of them. These and others like them are all roots of bitterness, destined to be burned at last. Pluck them up at once when you find them within you, and shun them when you meet them without; so shall you escape the destruction to which they are doomed.

THE SOUL PALACE.

THE PHILOSOPHER AND THE LITTLE GIRL. — THE PALACE. — THE JUDGE. — MEMORY. — HOPE.

A PHILOSOPHER once asked a little girl if she had a soul. She looked up into his face with an air of astonishment and offended dignity, and replied, "To be sure I have."

"What makes you think you have?"

"Because I have," she promptly replied.

"But how do you *know* you have a soul?"

"Because I *do* know," she answered again. It was a child's reason, but the

philosopher could hardly have given a better.

"Well, then," said he, after a moment's consideration, "if you know you have a soul, can you tell me what your soul is?"

"Why," said she, "I am six years old; and don't you suppose that I know what my soul is?"

"Perhaps you do; if you will tell me, I shall find out whether you do or not."

"Then you think I don't know," she replied; "but I do; it is *my think*."

"Your *think!*" said the philosopher, astonished in his turn; "who told you so?"

"Nobody; I should be ashamed if I did not know that without being told."

The philosopher had puzzled his brain a great deal about the soul, but he could not have given a better definition of it, in so few words.

"It is my think," said she.

And now, children, I am going to tell you what I think about the soul. I think it is a little palace within each one of you. It is made of richer materials than kings' palaces. Even Solomon's ivory house would not compare with it; nor would his temple which he built in Jerusalem, which the Jews were so proud of, compare with it. It was not made by human hands; but God spake the word, and it arose in all its fair proportions. Your heavenly Father, the great maker and builder of all things, formed it, and fashioned it, and placed it within you; and there it is.

He made also the temple of your body, but that will grow old and fall to pieces by and by — the soul palace never will. It is made to last forever. If you do not

mar it, it will shine more beautiful and glorious when the outer temple is demolished and laid away in the grave. Be careful, then, lest the stain of anger, or malice, or envy, or pride, or covetousness, or disobedience be found upon it, for it takes something more expensive than floods of tears to wash away such stains.

In this palace there are a number of apartments, and each apartment has its own occupant. In the highest room in this soul palace sits a grave personage; he looks very much like a judge upon the bench. Over his head hang a pair of scales; in one hand he holds a whip, and in the other a crown. When he is displeased, he looks very stern, and the lash of his whip is terrible to the offender. None ever felt it who did not quake with fear. One man in

ancient times cried out, when he felt the sting, "My punishment is greater than I can bear;" and another, "My sin is ever before me;" and another "went away and hanged himself." In the other hand I said he held a crown, and he places it upon the head of those who do well. O, there are none so peaceful and happy as they who are so fortunate as to find such a rich reward. When he is pleased, peace and joy reign throughout every room in the palace. And what is the name of this judge who holds so high a place in your soul? Children, can you tell? His name is *Conscience.* There he sits on the bench, day after day, and sometimes even in the nighttime, *thinking*, *thinking*, unless some reprobate blows out his lights, and shuts up his court room, and bars the door, determined

that he never shall pass any more judgment. But the hope of the guilty man is vain, for by and by he will break the door down, and punish him for his wickedness with a whip of scorpions. Did you never feel his whip when you had done wrong? Did you never feel its sting after you had spoken an angry word, or disobeyed your parents, or broken the Sabbath, or turned a deaf ear to the Savior's call? And did not the sting poison all your joys? It is the good only who receive the tokens of his approbation; the bad he will follow with his whip through life, and into the other world. O, make your peace with him now, before the evil days come.

In another apartment sits one *musing*, *musing*. Sometimes a cloud is on her brow, and she looks as if she would weep. Past

trials, misfortunes, misdeeds start up — she hoped they had been buried forever. Now there is a gleam of sunshine on her countenance. Happy days long past are returning — youthful days, or perhaps that joyful season when the soul first found peace in believing. Now she throws open the windows of her room towards Jerusalem, and sings one of the songs of Zion. And who is this, children? Do you know her name? Is it not *Memory?* She is the bearer of good tidings to those who love the Lord; but the wicked hate her, and would shut up her apartment forever, if they could. O, what would lost souls give if they could stop thinking of Sabbath school instructions neglected, parental warnings despised, and the strivings of the Spirit resisted! Would you be happy here and hereafter? Make

friends with *Memory*. Lay up in her apartment good thoughts and good deeds, to be painted on her canvas and reflected in her mirror.

In another bright apartment of your soul palace sits one who is very beautiful; she is ever looking in one direction. She is planning, and musing, and wishing, and scheming for the future. When the candle of the Lord shines upon her, she can see things a great way off. Her eye pierces through the curtain which hangs between time and eternity, and beholds those shining mansions which her Lord has prepared for those that love him. Children, who is this? She is one of the *thinkers* — you cannot help knowing her name. O, yes; her name is *Hope*. She is a friend indeed. I saw a young man bowed down

under the weight of his many sins. He went about mourning from day to day. A dark cloud hung over him. At length he repented of his sins, and Hope looked out from her chamber, and cried, "Rejoice, for thy Redeemer liveth, and thy sins are forgiven!" O, how sweetly her voice sounded in his ears! But one thing I must not forget: if you live in sin, and die without repenting, she will give up her chamber to one who bears a very different name, and you will never see her beaming eye or hear her sweet voice again.

There are other apartments in that palace, and other occupants; but I have no time to speak of them now. Look within, and you will find them in their places, all thinking, thinking. Remember, that, whatever else dies, *thought never dies.* You will

think and *think* forever. You cannot stop thinking. Solomon's temple is gone, long ago. One stone is not left upon another. And his ivory palace is gone, too, and the costly palaces of other men have disappeared; but the palace of the human soul stands. Abraham still *thinks* in heaven, nor has he grown tired of thinking. Dives thinks, too, and so does Judas, each in his own place. How much would they give if they could stop thinking! how much if they could murder their own souls! But they cannot. Souls you have — souls you must have; and they must *think*, *think*, in the world above or the world below.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

JOSEPH AND MARY. — THE SCHOOL HOUSE. — THE SABBATH SCHOOL. — THE CONCERT.

In my journey through this world, I have met with many remarkable things of which I have been led to exclaim, What do they mean? I went into a farm house, and there I saw a man and his wife, and half a dozen little children, some of them quite small. I noticed that the eyes of their parents were on them continually. If one was missing at the dinner table, they could not eat until the little truant was found. If one was absent at night, they could not sleep until he was safely in bed. If one of

them was sick, the fond mother was greatly troubled, and sat up all night by its little crib without seeming to feel fatigued. The father went out to his work, day after day, day after day, and brought home his hard earnings, and put them all into the mouths of his little ones. He laid by his spare shillings to buy shoes and stockings for little Joseph and Mary, and a gown or a little jacket for some of the rest, and cared not though he went ragged and hungry himself. All their care seemed to be for their little ones. They were up in the morning a long time before the sun, and at night their candles went not out — they ceased not from their labor. And it was all for the children. They looked and acted as if there was nobody else in the world but their six children; nor did the children seem to

be sensible that they were the objects of so much care. And as I considered this strange sight, I said to myself, "*What does it mean?*"

I went into a school house, and lo, it was filled with boys and girls, some of them quite small, just beginning to learn their A, B, C's. The whole district had put their money together and built a neat house, and had taken much pains to get a good teacher, one who would be sure to take good care of them, and think of nothing else. Their parents had furnished them with books and good warm clothing, and some of them even carried them to school, in snowy weather, in sleighs and sleds — *any how*, if they could only get them there.

And there they were as thick as bees,

and as busy and as *buzzing*. Their teacher kept his eye upon them, never relaxing his efforts to do them good. Their parents and their minister often came in to see that all was going on *right;* and they were always greatly interested, and talked, and looked, and listened as if they thought that about all the world was in that school house. And yet there was nobody there but thirty or forty children! Is the whole town moved, the whole district *waked up*, are the fathers and mothers all alive, that these few children should learn to read? *What does it all mean?*

Sunday came, and I went into the Sabbath school, and there I saw a stranger sight than I had ever seen before. The children were again assembled, but under other teachers. The fathers and the mothers

in the church were there, each seated before a class of young persons. The superintendent prayed, and his prayer was all about the *children.* They sung a hymn, but it was for the children. They taught them out of the word of God, but they skipped over those parts of it that were not adapted to the understanding of children. And as they talked a new fire was kindled up in their hearts, and they wept; but it was all for the children. The minister came in, and the stranger; and as they looked upon the classes, drawn out like files of soldiers, they mused, and looked again, and mused; and at last they wept, too; but it was all for the children. And as they looked, one said to the other, "What do you see in these children?" And he answered, "I see, as it were, the company of two great

armies." It seemed to them that the children were all the world, ay, and all the church, too.

And when the concert came, they got them all together and set them down in the front seats; and the church members, the fathers and the mothers, looked on them, and their eye affected their hearts. What did they see in a little company of children which should so unlock the sources of their tears? They prayed, and talked, and mused, and *while they mused the fire burned;* and they looked again, and wept, and prayed; but it was all about the children. Said I to myself, "*What does this mean?*" What is there about these children which should so wake up the affections and energies of the church? Are they so wise and so good, so gentle and so dutiful,—are they a

little company of angels sent down from heaven to draw men up thither, — that they should engross so much attention? Alas, no! They are not angels in disguise. *What, then, does it all mean?*

I ask you, children, what it means? Why is it that so many eyes are upon you? Why is it that you are encompassed with so great a cloud of anxious witnesses? Why is it that your fathers and mothers are all the time watching you? Awake or asleep, at home or abroad, their eyes are always upon you. Why is it that they build school houses for you, and are so careful to commit you to the guidance of faithful teachers? Why is it that the Sabbath school has been opened for you, and pious teachers watch over you so tenderly — yes, and pray over you, too? Did

you ever think of it, children? Can any one of you explain this mystery? It cannot be because you are so much better than grown-up men and women. Have your teachers ever told you so? No! no! Your teachers are persuaded that you are all sinners, even as others. They would not dare to call you angels, or *almost angels.* O, no! That is Satan's doctrine, the same that he preached to Eve in the garden of Eden. What, then, does it mean? O, I see you cannot tell.

I turn to your teachers, and ask them why all this anxiety about the children? What do you see in them which should bring you here every Sabbath — which should so fill your hearts with concern, and your mouth with arguments? Do you say it is because they have souls to be saved or lost? So

has that gay and thoughtless young woman in the giddy whirl of pleasure — so has that careless young man abroad on the perilous sea of life — ay, and so has that old man tottering on the brink of the grave a soul to be saved or lost; and why are you not thus anxious about them?

I turn to the fathers and mothers, and ask you, "What does this mean? Why are you ever looking down with an anxious and a tearful eye upon the children?" O, methinks I hear you say, "We can tell you why. It is not altogether because they have souls to be saved; but there is another reason why we are concerned for them. Our days are almost numbered. Our places in the church, our places around the domestic hearth, will ere long be vacant; and when we are gone, these children are to fill

our places. How will they fill them? If the children are not trained up to love virtue, and order, and good government, what will become of society, what will become of the state? If they do not come out on the Lord's side, what will become of the church? If they grow up to blaspheme God and profane his day, what will become of his holy name, what will become of his holy Sabbath? If they grow up to neglect our counsels and mock at the restraints of the family, what will become of our name? It is because they are the *hope* of the state, as well as the church, that we care so much and pray so much for them."

And now, children, you have heard the answer of your fathers and mothers. In a few years you will be fathers and mothers in their stead; and if you are not Christians,

what will become of the church, what will become of the world, what will become of yourselves?

HOPE.

THE HUSBANDMAN. — THE MARINER — THE LOVER. — THE SICK MAN. — THE TELESCOPE. — THE ANCHOR. — THE GRANDDAUGHTER. — THE COUNTERFEITER.

THE graces of the spirit are all written feminine; perhaps on account of their beauty and adaptedness to soothe and encourage us in the struggle of life. Perhaps because they are so *hearty*, and ardent, and sanguine in every thing they do. Perhaps because they are so fruitful — bearing fruit to the glory of God. Hope is a woman; and I wish I could describe her so that you would always know her whenever and wherever you may chance to meet her. It

is Hope, the Christian, that I am going to introduce to you, and I shall be all the better pleased if you should recognize in her an old acquaintance; but I am afraid that the most of you have never known her. If I could make you fall in love with her, I should make you happy.

Hope is erect, radiant, beautiful — a little taller than Faith, or, at least, appears to be. Perhaps this may be owing to the fact that Faith, on account of her having read and studied so much, has contracted the habit of stooping a little in her gait. Hope has a beautiful eye — full of life, sparkling with joy, ever looking forward into to-morrow, next year, and onward into eternity. "*Onward and upward*" is her motto; forgetting the things that are behind, and pressing forward to that which is before. Those

who are so fortunate as to catch a portion of its fire, live forever. They cannot die. She is fleet of foot as a roe; and when she puts on her angel's wings, she outflies every thing but thought. Upon her head she wears an ornament of surpassing beauty —it is called the helmet of salvation. Hope nerves the husbandman to plough his grounds and sow his seed in the spring time; and if he grows weary in his work, she whispers in his ear, "These barren fields will have a better look by and by. Think of the waving corn, the fragrance of the new-mown hay, the loaded fruit trees, the replenished storehouses, —these all will greet your eyes in the autumn. Think of them, and they will nerve your arm for the intervening days of labor." Does the mariner, bound on a distant voyage, weep

at parting with his wife, and family, and friends? She whispers in his ear, "You shall come again rejoicing; good days are in store for you; weep not, son of the ocean."

Do fond lovers feel at parting that they may never meet again? Hope cheers their hearts with words of encouragement. Does a man fear and tremble when he is about to adventure all his estate in a new enterprise? She bids him be strong, and fear not. Does the sick man waste away upon his couch of pain, and fear he shall never be restored to health again? She stands like a ministering angel at his bedside, and bids him take courage. She reckons up and sets before him all the favorable symptoms, and assures him that the medicine will operate favorably, and his eyes shall yet see good. Does the Christian go down

trembling into the valley of the shadow of death? Ah, then she proves herself an angel indeed! Listen! what words of encouragement! — "It is only thy body which is about to die, nor shall *that* sleep forever. When the trump of the archangel shall sound, it shall awake. Thy soul, it cannot die. It shall live forever in the bosom of thy Redeemer. Rejoice, then, and be glad, for thy redemption draweth near." And he does rejoice, and triumph over death and hell, even as did his Lord. O, hear him: "I see the blessed city! I shall soon be there! Heaven's breezes fan my fevered brow! Light breaks in upon my darkened soul! Haste, angels, haste, and bear me up to heaven upon your downy wings! I am weary of earth — I long to be gone! O for the blissful scenes which are opening

before me!" Children, what would you give for such a friend to minister to you in a dying hour?

Hope carries at her side a beautiful glass, through which she lets her friends look into the future. The astronomers have a glass which brings down the stars from the sky, but it will not compare with Hope's. Her glass brings down the New Jerusalem, that glorious city. If looked through aright, it reveals, in all their splendor, the gates of pearl, and "the sapphire-colored throne." Is any weary of the trials and labors of this vale of tears — is any overburdened with afflictions and sicknesses — is any disposed to murmur at the dispensations of God's providence — let him look through Hope's glass, and one glimpse of the shining goal shall make him forget all his sorrows.

Hope carries in her hand a golden anchor. As the anchor holds the ship when the ocean storm beats upon her, so Hope's anchor holds the soul secure when overwhelmed by adversity. And the greater the affliction, the sorer the trial, the firmer is its hold upon the *Rock of Ages*. Trusting to such an anchor, she sings, when the storm is most terrific, "Though the earth be moved out of its place, yet will I not be moved — my trust is in God." If you only have this anchor on board your vessel, you will be safe. All the storms of earth cannot drive her from her moorings.

Hope is the daughter of Experience, and the granddaughter of Patience. So Paul reckoned her genealogy. "Patience, Experience; and Experience, Hope." Hope, in times past, has looked into the future, and

comforted herself in the prospect of the blessedness laid up in store for her; and she has never been disappointed. I am speaking, as I have said before, of Hope the Christian. There is another of her name, who boasts herself to be somebody, of whom I shall speak by and by. I said that Hope never knew God's promises to fail. What she desired she sometime realized — if not to-day, to-morrow; if not to-morrow, next month or next year. She never charged God with slackness concerning his promise; and if it seemed long in coming, she patiently waited for it, feeling that his promise was sure, and would be fulfilled even to the last jot and tittle. Experience, therefore, is the mother of Hope. She is patient, and she can well afford to be. She makes the best of every thing —

bears all her crosses with composure. If she didn't, she would not be like her grandmother. Her own experience teaches her to believe that what has been, with regard to her heavenly Father's promises, will be again. If it did not, she could not be her mother's daughter. And so Paul, though he did not think much of *endless genealogies*, got the pedigree right: *Patience*, *Experience; and Experience*, *Hope.*

Hope has her counterfeit, as well as the other Christian graces. Things without value are never counterfeited. There is and has been, for a long time in the world, a personage who calls herself Hope; but she is an impostor. She is no more like the real than night is like day. Men, blind and wayward, do not always discover the cheat; but God sees through it, and, at the

last, they shall see through it, too, for it will prove in the end like the giving up of the ghost to him who has been deceived. She wears a helmet on her head, which glitters when the sun shines; but it is not *salvation.* Her eye is dazzling, flashing; but it lacks the depth, the ardor, the life of the true. Her wings are gay, like the wings of the butterfly, made for the summer only; they drop off as she approaches the winter of the tomb. She carries a glass by her side; but it was not made in heaven. It shows bright spots in the future, which, when you have reached, are changed into the blackness of darkness. It lures you on to follow that uncertain light which dances over bogs and pitfalls. She also carries in her hand an anchor; but it is not real gold, nor is it, in fact, a real anchor at all. It will

not hold the ship in a moderate gale; what, then, will become of her when the winds are let loose and the storm rages on the deep? Beware of this false Hope.

And now, children and youth, make it your great business to secure Hope, the CHRISTIAN'S Hope, as your companion for life. She will adorn you with her beauty; she will put upon your head a crown like her own; she will put a glass and an anchor into your hands which will not fail you in the time of need. She will not leave you amidst the fearful rolling of Jordan's waves. She will pass you in at heaven's gate.

A STRANGER AT THE DOOR.

A STRANGER OF NOBLE BIRTH.—THE STORM.—HE KNOCKS.—WOUNDED AND SICK.

THOUGHTLESS youth, a stranger stands knocking and waiting at thy door. The night is cold and dark. He has turned away from a cold, unfeeling world, and now makes his appeal to thee: "Open unto me, for my head is wet with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." But who is this stranger that seeketh shelter of thee? O, he is one of nobler birth than thou. He has dwelt in a palace, he has entertained angels; but now he comes an applicant at thy door. It is dark, and

cold, and cheerless without, and all who are in the streets pass by and care not, though he perish in the storm; and all within remain in their beds, and hate to be disturbed. They will take their ease, caring not who it is that asks admission. Wilt thou not arise and open to him?

The winds are up — the tempest rages — the thunders shake the heavens — the lightnings are darting death. O, is it not a terrible night? The world look darkly on him as they pass by. They revile him, they taunt him, they mock him with cruel words: "Why standest thou there in the storm? Why not open the door thyself, thou who claimest the ownership of the house? Why not enter in without knocking?" Thus they pass by, wagging their heads, and saying, "He saved others, himself

he cannot save. He stilled the tempest once by a word, but now he is shorn of his strength." Thus stands he at thy door, O thoughtless youth!

And not only is the night cold, and dark, and cheerless, — not only does the storm beat upon his unprotected head, — but the stranger is *sick*. He has been waylaid, and his enemies have wounded him in his hands and in his feet, and pierced his side with a spear. His wounds have not been dressed. No kind friend has poured oil into them. Weak and famishing, he stands at thy door, and asks for admission. *It is the Lord!* Behold the holes in his hands and in his side! His enemies have nailed him to the cross — *the Lord of glory*, thine only hope! They thought they had killed him past all resurrection. And they would cru-

cify him again! He stands at the door of thy heart, O thou thoughtless, ease-loving, ungrateful, hardhearted. Wilt thou not open the door? Still he knocks! Still the storm of the world's hate is beating upon his head. Still he cries, "Open unto me." Young man, young woman, many a day, many a month, many a year, when the storm was loudest, has he stood there, showing his bleeding side to thee, but all in vain. Thou hast been too well satisfied with the world's comforts — thine own fire, thine own bed, thine own wardrobe, thine own table — to listen to the call of thy benefactor. All these comforts he has lent to thee, and still thou refuseth to share them with him, still thou wilt let him plead in vain. O, ungrateful — O, lost to all feeling. He comes to save thee, and thou wilt not

open the door to him! True, he was born in a manger; true, he had not where to lay his head; but it was for thee. True, he was despised and rejected of men; true, he suffered as a traitor, between two thieves, the most ignominious of deaths; but it was for thee. It was all because thou art such a sinner. Had it not been for this, heaven had not been emptied of its glory, Calvary had not drank his blood. And yet, when he knocks at the door of thine heart, holding the keys of heaven in his hands, thou art like the deaf adder — thou wilt not hear him! When he offers to unlock the gate of glory for thee, thou wilt not unbar thine own door for him! O, remember, children; remember, youth; remember, all ye who attend upon Sabbath school instruction, that he will not always take these

slights, these indignities, these refusals from your hands and let you go unpunished. The day of reckoning is at hand. If he turn away from your door in wrath, you are lost forever.

"BEHOLD, I STAND AT THE DOOR AND KNOCK."

The winds are up, the sky o'ercast;
Night holds his wintry throne;
A traveller is in the street,
A wanderer, sick and lone.
Hark! at thy bolted door he knocks;
The driving sleet is in his locks.

The world look idly, coldly on,
And pass the sufferer by;
If they can safely reach *their* home,
They care not who may die.
Hark, careless one! again he knocks;
The cold night winds are in his locks.

He is thy friend — he gave thee all
The comforts of thy home;
For he was once a king, though now
A beggar doomed to roam.
Wounded and sick, he knocks again;
O, shall he knock, and knock in vain?

And he is still a king, though now
In thine own nature veiled;
He has a glorious throne on high,
Though to the cross he's nailed.
Hark! was not that a bitter cry?
"Eloi, lama, sabachthani?"

O thoughtless one, 'twas all for thee;
And shall he go unfed,
Unlodged, uncared for, while the storm
Beats on his naked head?
And still he waits, he knocks again;
Say, wilt thou let him knock in vain?

How wilt thou do when thy night comes?
When the storm beats on thy soul?

When the dread lightnings round thee flash,
And awful thunders roll?
Hark! hark! Open without delay;
Thou'lt need a friend in that dread day.

THE WEDDING.

THE PRINCE. — THE JOURNEY. — THE BEAUTIFUL WOMAN. — THE EDUCATION. — OPPOSITION. — THE ROYAL WEDDING. — THE STARS SING.

A CERTAIN king of ancient times, of great power and high renown, had but one son, and he was distinguished throughout the empire for the beauty of his person and the kindness of his nature. He was so amiable and condescending, especially to the very lowest of the king's subjects, that wherever he went he was much caressed, and made to himself many friends in all parts of his father's extensive dominions. Nor was he, as is too apt to be the case,

the subject of envy among the noble of the court. On the contrary, his name was woven into the songs which were sung on festive occasions; and, in short, he was so much the darling of his father and all who knew him, that one might be led to fear that his popularity would not always last.

This beloved prince, on one occasion, journeyed into a remote province of his father's — a province which had, for some time previous, been in a state of revolt. They had thrown off the yoke of their rightful sovereign, and declared themselves free, and thereby greatly offended him. He had declared them rebels and outlaws, and threatened, unless they repented and offered some atonement for their misconduct, and become loyal subjects again, that they never should come within sight of his

palace. No other province in all his dominions had ever shown the least uneasiness under his government, and it therefore became necessary that he should make an example of the first in rebellion, lest others might follow in their track. It was while judgment was delaying that the prince was on the visit to which we have referred. While there, he became enamoured of a beautiful woman, having spread over her a costly banner which he always carried with him. This banner was made in the palace by the *three that bear record.* It was possessed of a wonderfully transforming power, and upon it was inscribed, in purple letters, "*Love.*" After she had been brought under this transforming banner, she became exceedingly beautiful, so beautiful that it was thought that the prince must have trans-

ferred to her some of his own excellence, or she never could have become so attractive. He became, as I said, greatly enamoured of her, and could not leave the place until he had made proposals of marriage and had been accepted, and he hoped soon to have the happiness of introducing her at court. True, she was very far below him in point of rank and spiritual endowments; but, in order to remedy this disparity as far as possible, he provided for her the best means of education — procured the most distinguished masters — furnished her with every possible means for rapid improvement. And, having such a noble and devoted suitor, and especially one whom she ardently loved, she had been a dull scholar, indeed, if she had not made great proficiency.

It was remarkable that, in proportion to

her advancement in knowledge, the graces of her person were heightened, until she became so surpassingly beautiful that all who knew her were filled with admiration. In short, her improvement was so manifest and so wonderful, that the prince became more and more enamoured of her, and insisted upon her naming an early day for their espousals.

But the course of love, however fervent and faithful it may be, is not always a smooth one. The affianced pair are often attacked by the tongue of slander, and doomed to feel the poisoned shafts of envy, and the anguish of hope deferred, before they reach the bright goal. Thus it was in this case; for as soon as it was known at court that such a marriage was in contemplation, the lords, and nobles, and chief

men of the realm were thrown into great commotion. The greater part praised the prince for this act of condescension, and maintained that he was fully qualified to judge in the case for himself, and would not throw himself away upon one who was altogether unworthy of him; and that, although she could not boast of so high a pedigree as himself, yet, when she became his wife, she would, by that act, be elevated to his rank. Others, on the contrary, were utterly opposed to the match. They thought it derogatory to the dignity of the prince, and also derogatory to their own, to receive into the palace one of so mean extraction, especially one who resided in a revolted province, which the king was about to punish for their misdeeds. They had proved themselves traitors, and she could not be

viewed in any other light than that of a traitoress, upon whom sentence of death had already been pronounced. Thus they aspersed her character, and spoke slightingly of her beauty, and finally declared, if the prince persisted in making her his wife, and bringing her home to take rank, in any sense, above themselves, they would no longer remain in the empire. They chose rather to go into exile than to render to this woman the honors due to the wife of the prince. The king, when he had heard of the reproach which was cast upon the prince and the bride elect, was greatly displeased. He openly espoused the cause of his son, and determined to bestow the honors of royalty upon the woman of his choice, and forthwith banished all the disaffected lords and nobles from his dominions. This being

done, preparations began to be made for the wedding. It was determined that the marriage should be solemnized in the province where the bride elect resided, and the king and all his court were to attend — the king, in his mercy, postponing the execution of his judgment until after the nuptials. He hoped by such a procedure to win the rebels back to their allegiance. This was a master stroke of policy, such as had never before been practised by any king or governor. The result showed the consummate wisdom of the king, for no sooner was the marriage consummated than the rebels, in great numbers, began to repent of their disloyalty, and begged to be taken again under the protection of his righteous government.

The wedding day and the wedding guests at length arrived. A fairer couple this

world never saw than were led to the altar that day. The bride was arrayed in the most costly robes, bedecked with gems which must have come from some distant country — they were too pure and brilliant for mortal eyes. But the beauty of her person far surpassed all her outward adornings. She seemed like one just dropped from the paradise above. "*Grace* was in all her steps, *heaven* in her eye." *The king is held in the galleries.* The prince was so enraptured that he could not refrain from exclaiming, "*Thou art all fair, my love! There is no spot in thee! Thou hast ravished my heart with one chain of thy neck!*" And as with infinite dignity and affection he led her to the altar, all the beholders were rapt in admiration. Heavenly music floated by on gentlest zephyrs; the stars sang together;

the trees of the wood clapped their hands; heaven and earth broke forth in a chorus of praise, as if their eyes had been newly opened upon a scene more glorious, more stupendous and captivating, than had ever before entered their hearts to conceive. O, it was a joyful day for that province! — a day to be celebrated from year to year, down to the end of time — a day in which the king's wrath was appeased, and a channel opened for pardon and richer blessings than they had ever dared to expect. The love of the prince knew no abatement. It was not of that kind which wanes with the nuptial moon. Nor did her beauty or her loveliness wane — it could not; for she was transformed into the image of *him who is altogether lovely*. After her week was fulfilled, she was to be taken up to the palace,

where the nuptials were again to be celebrated with greater pomp. But I must make that the subject of another chapter.

THE WEDDING, CONCLUDED.

THE KING'S PALACE. — THE SONG. — THE NOBLES WITH THEIR HARPS. — THE GREAT COMPANY. — THE PRINCE AND HIS BRIDE.

The week which should elapse before the bride could be introduced into the king's palace was long, as time was computed in the revolted province; but short, according to the palace reckoning; for, with the king, a thousand years are as one day. This was a week of preparation, on her part, to go up higher; and having her lord ever at her side, she was encouraged to improve every opportunity of making herself appear more comely in his eyes. They had

pledged their faith to each other in the most public manner, and the bands which united them were stronger than death. They were never tired of speaking of the beauties which they discovered in each other, and pledged their mutual loves in the sweetest songs which were ever sung. Some of these have come down to us. I have a mind to give you one or two of them. You must expect that much of their original sweetness and power will be lost in doing them into my own language. This that I am going to present you is one of the songs of the prince to his bride. It is entitled, —

"SHE IS THE CHOICE ONE."

I have looked upon the fairest flowers
In royal gardens blooming,
And those that in the forest lie,
Unseen by any mortal eye,

So meek and unassuming;
But, 'mongst them all, my love, there are
None which with thee can e'er compare.

I have seen full many a beauteous queen,
Bright palaces adorning,
And maidens in sequestered vales,
Unvisited by wintry gales,
Fresh as the opening morning;
But thou, my love, dost far outshine
These diamonds from the richest mine.

And I have seen, in realms above,
Bright ranks of angels shining;
And myriads in other spheres,
Whose eyes were never dimmed with tears,
Because to sin inclining;
But thou art fairer — to me bound
By sweeter ties, my latest found.

This, which follows, is a song of the bride to her lord, and its motto is, —

"THE BANNER OF LOVE."

I sat me down under his shade,
Secure from the sun's burning rays —
The zephyrs around me that played
My spirit allured to his praise.

The foes that spread lures for my feet,
The spirits malign, are all fled;
They dare not invade my retreat,
While his banner is over my head.

The words of his mouth are like dews
That distil on the desolate waste,
Or the branches that never refuse
The fruit that's so sweet to the taste.

I am come to thy banqueting house,
For thither my feet thou hast led;
And here will I pay thee my vows,
While thy banner is over my head.

With these, and such as these, they passed the time, and will, till the triumphal day arrives, when she shall be presented, by her lord, to the king, surrounded by admiring angels. This presentation day is not so distant as it was. When it will come is not set down, precisely, in the record; but this we know, that it will come just as soon as *all things are got ready.* It will be the day of days — only one such in all the annals of time. We have been made acquainted with some of the arrangements which are making in the palace. One is, that when the day arrives the nobles shall take their station upon the walls of the city, with their harps in their hands, *expecting;* and when they see the prince, and his bride, and his retinue, in the distance, they shall cry: —

"Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel?"

And he shall answer, "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save."

And as he approaches, they shall cry again, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?"

And he shall answer for her, "It is my bride, my redeemed one — 'beautiful as Tirza, comely as Jerusalem.'"

And when they approach the gate, they shall say, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in."

They on the wall shall answer, "Who is this King of glory?"

And the great company whose robes have been washed in the blood of the

Lamb shall reply, "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle."

The trumpets shall sound the jubilee, as they enter the gates. Then the doors of the palace are to be thrown open, and the Prince will present his elect one, and his Father will accept her on his account, and approve the choice. Then shall be heard the *sound of harpers, harping upon their harps.* These are some of the arrangements for the grand procession of that triumphal day, as near as they can be gathered from the record. That day is hastening on. It will come when the Prince shall have put all his enemies under his feet. Children, have you understood this? I have spoken to you in parables. Search after the hidden meaning. Do you live in that revolted province? Will you choose so kind, so

powerful a Prince for your friend and protector? Will you be one of that grand procession which will be led by him into paradise? Will you be one of heaven's harpers? If so, you must give your hearts to the Redeemer now. If not, you will be one of those whom he will put under his feet at the last. *O, seek him while he may be found; O, call upon him while he is near.*

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"EARLY WILL I SEEK THEE."

DAVID'S SONG.—CALL THE CHILDREN EARLY.

CHILD, youth, take this to thyself. Say, "Early will *I* seek thee. Why should I not follow the example of so good a man as David in this? Truly, the Lord is with me even as he was with him. Early and late — in the silent watches and in the broad daylight — at midnight and at noon. Why should I not rise up in the morning, before the bird, and praise the Lord for his goodness? Have I not received manifold more from the hand of my heavenly father than the cock that heralds in the first glim-

mering streaks of day with his accustomed song? Am not I of more account in the world — am. not I endowed with nobler powers — am not I capable of doing more good, of glorifying God more, than the birds that sing among the branches, and make melody to the Lord, at the dawn of day? Why, then, should I not rise before them, and lead them in the song? Why should I not say, Early will I seek thee?"

David's song was the song of the bird. He watched for the first streak of dawn that he might sing it; and he sung it with a loud voice, with three accompaniments: his harp, his heart, and his understanding. He sung it with a loud voice, as if he was determined not to be outdone by the feathered race. He had been asleep during the still hours of night, during which he

was not sensible of God's presence, or that angels were watching around his bed to keep him from harm; but, now he is awake, he begins to realize that God had been his Protector during the dark and defenceless hours, otherwise he never would have witnessed the dawning of another day. He realizes this, and exclaims, "Early will I seek thee, O Lord." Yes, he rises before the birds. And wilt thou not say, "I have as much reason for thankfulness as David, and I too will say, 'Early will I seek thee, O Lord'"?

The cattle and the sheep are up early — they are abroad in the vales and on the hill tops, brushing the dew from the grass, slowly tracking their devious way across the fields, seeking their meat from God. That which he giveth them they gather,

and mutely mean his praise. Am not I better than an ox or a sheep? cannot I do more good in the world than they? Then why should not I be up early, seeking my meat from God, and doing his will? Yes, my motto shall be, "Early will I seek thee."

And not only will I seek thee early and first in the morning, but early and first in every work — first, when I engage in any business or enterprise; first, when daily toil is to be entered upon; first, when I taste the bounties of his table; first, when I work with my mind; first, when any duty is to be performed; first, in prayer; first, in praise; first, in joy; first, in sorrow; first, in sickness; first, in health. Early will I seek thee in every undertaking — early, in the Sabbath school; early, in the day school;

early, in the day; early, in the week; early, in the month; early, in the year; and above all, early in life, in the morning of my days, before the evil days come, will I seek thee. There is no place where God is not, no circumstances in which he may not be found. Why, then, should I ever act as if it were not so? Why should I ever forget that I cannot live without God? Why should I not first of all seek him? He has said, "They that seek me early shall find me;" and why may not the promise be fulfilled in my own case? To-morrow's seekers, next year's seekers, late seekers have no promise. To-morrow, next year, may find them in another world, beyond the reach of hope. The promise meets my case — it was made for me — why should I not realize it?

But what is it to seek the Lord? It is to know something of him. We cannot rightly seek God without knowing something of his existence, something of his attributes, something of his law, something of the way of salvation.

What is it to seek the Lord? It is to feel our need of him. We never can seek the Lord aright without feeling that it is in him we live, and move, and have our being. We need his Spirit, that we may see our sinfulness and our need of forgiveness. We need his mercy, that we may be forgiven. We need his power to keep us alive. God is not dependent upon us, but we are upon him. We cannot help him, who is infinitely strong. We cannot teach him any thing who is infinite in knowledge. We cannot raise him any higher who is

infinitely above us. No. He does not need us, but we need him.

What is it to seek the Lord? It is to love and adore him. It is to make him the supreme object of our affection. It is to thank him for the gift of his only-begotten Son, who died that we might live. This is the way to seek the Lord. He will not be found of any who seek him in a different way. Though we may seek him early, yet, if it be to be seen of men, we cannot find him. We may seek the Lord earnestly, yet, if it be only that he would help us to gain some private end, we shall not find him. Though we seek him ever so early and ever so earnestly, yet, if we do not love him for his own excellence and thank him for his favors, he will not be found of us.

I have told you something of what it is

to seek the Lord, and now again I ask you to adopt the language of David, and say, "*Early will I seek thee.*" Hitherto I have forgotten God, but henceforth I will remember him. The instructions of the Sabbath school have been to me as the idle wind; but henceforth they shall be the truth of God. Repenting of sin, forsaking my evil ways, feeling my need of a Savior, earnestly, humbly, lovingly, trustingly, *early* will I seek thee.

Child, youth, if this be thy resolution, put it in practice, and thou *shalt find* him — find him to be a God at hand, and not afar off. Thou shalt find him to be a God of love, a God of mercy, a God of truth. His promise will never fail, his mercy he will never withhold, his love shall be forever. He will lead thee into green pastures, and

beside the still waters make thee to lie down. And when thou hast finished thy course on the earth, he will receive thee into a mansion above, which at infinite expense he has prepared for thee.

CALL THE CHILDREN EARLY.

Call the children early, mother,
While the birds do sing,
While the dew is on the flowers
Which by the hillside spring.
Oft repeat the waking word,
Till they rise to praise the Lord.

Call the children early, father,
While the dew is on;
Great the work that must be done
Before the morning's gone.
Call them round the altar bright
On which burns devotion's light.

Call the children early, teacher;
To their wondering eyes
Every Sabbath day set forth
The pearl of richest price.
Bring them early to the Lord;
Thou shalt reap a rich reward.

Call the children early, shepherd,
Give the lambs thy care;
See that they are folded safe
Within the heart of prayer.
Call them at the dawn of day;
Lead them in the narrow way.

Call the children, *Spirit Holy*,
With thy word of power;
Call them early, call them early,
In the morning hour.
Call them ere their hearts grow hard,
Ere the gate of heaven is barred.

THE GOLDEN MINE.

THE GOLD SEEKERS.—HARD WORK.—THE FIRE.—THE FLOOD.—THE ROBBER.—ANOTHER MINE.—EASY TO FIND.—PURE GOLD.—FIRE CAN'T BURN IT.—FLOODS CAN'T DROWN IT.

The gold mines are a great way off. Those who would go to them must spend much time and money in getting ready. It is a long and perilous journey, and he would be a foolish man who did not set down first and count the cost. The way to the mines is a hard way; it is through the wilderness, or across the ocean, and many die before they reach them.

The gold seekers leave their own happy

homes, their wives and children, their fathers and mothers, their kindred and friends, their meetings and Sabbath schools behind them. They bid farewell to them all, and set their faces towards a land which they have never seen, a country they know nothing of. All is uncertain before them. They cannot carry with them the promise of God, that they shall find the object they seek for, or even return again to the homes which they have left.

After many months of travel, suffering, and privation, they reach the spot about which they have thought, and talked, and dreamed so much. They have reached the mines at last; but they find that the gold cannot be scraped up by handfuls, as they expected, but is to be obtained only by great pains and labor. They must toil and

sweat, day after day, day after day, week in and week out, and, perhaps, never strike the *vein;* or, if they do, it yields but a scant supply. Alas! they are disappointed. They expected much, but have found little. One in a hundred, or, it may be, one in a thousand, is successful. He finds a heap of the glittering dust; but he has lost his health in the search. He has found a heap of gold, but with it an enfeebled body. An aching head and a fainting heart will not permit him to enjoy it. And he exclaims, as he lies upon a sick bed, with no kind hand to minister to his wants, "I am cheated! O, what a bad bargain I have made!"

But it may be that while the majority make an utter failure, and the few gain their thousands, to the loss of health, here

and there one may become rich, with health unimpaired; but the eye of the thief and the robber is upon him. He has nobody's promise, upon which he can rely, that he shall not lose all his wealth in less time than it took him to gain it. The fire may burn it, the floods may drown it, the winds may blow it away, the earthquake may swallow it up, the swindler may cheat him out of it, the thief may steal it, the robber may take it from him by force, and take his life, too, if he dares defend it. It seemed to him as if every body and every thing had conspired together to get away his gold from him. Look at him — what care on his brow! what fear in his eye! How he is agitated if the fire has broke loose in his neighborhood! How he turns pale when the money market is

shaken! His money will not drive away the pestilence — will not buy off the cholera; the ring of his dollars will not charm pain out of its sting, or persuade Death to postpone his call. No; nor will it bribe the angel that keeps the gate of heaven to open to him. What, then, can his gold do for him? Go ask the pillow on which he would fain rest his weary head at night. If it had a tongue, it would tell you. It can make him unhappy; but, until the camel can go through the needle's eye, it cannot make him happy.

Children, there is another mine in this world beside the one which I have been describing, and I am now going to call your attention to it. In the first place, you do not have to go half round the globe to get to it. It is close by home. Whosoever

will may dig in it, with the assurance that he shall find. He has the promise of God that he shall not be disappointed, or, if he is disappointed, it will be such a disappointment as a certain queen once experienced, who made a long journey to Jerusalem to see Solomon when he was in his glory; and when she had heard his answers to all her hard questions, and seen the steps by which he went up to the house of the Lord, she said, "The half was not told me." The way to this mine is not long, nor hard, nor dangerous. You will not have to leave kindred, and friends, and home in order to seek it. But I hear one say, "Is the mine worth seeking for? Is the gold good?" I am glad to hear you ask the question, for I was just going to say, in the second place, *the gold is good.* It is very

precious, worth more, a great deal, than the gold I told you of at first, which was so hard to get at. The gold diggers that I spoke of tell about theirs being eighteen and twenty carats fine. But this is all fine, seven times purified, without alloy. The least grain of it will weigh down whole cartloads of the other. No man has ever yet been able to estimate its full value; no man has ever yet made a pair of scales large enough to weigh it. It has been pronounced good by him who knows and who cannot lie. It has been proved good by the best judges of precious metals — such men as David the king, and John the evangelist, and Paul the apostle, and other truth-loving men, who have dug for it in every age. So you need not have any doubt about the quality of the gold.

It is not hard to find this mine. You do not have to send out exploring parties through the wilderness, or over the burning sands — they do not have to climb the mountains, or turn the rivers from their beds, and then, perhaps, find nothing but cinders and ashes. No. I said the mine is not far from every man's door, nor is it difficult to tell where it is located. The *veins* where run the purest streams — perhaps you have heard how the well-diggers tell where the secret springs lie, deep down in the ground, by holding a peculiar kind of rods over them. They pass the rods over the surface of the ground; and when they bend of their own accord towards it, they think they have found the right place, and begin to dig; and so the diggers in this mine, if they carry the right rods and follow

the directions carefully, are sure to strike the *veins*, and are always richly repaid for their trouble. These rods have each a name, and, lest you get the wrong sort, I will give you the names of two or three of them. The first is called *Humility*, the second is *Perseverance*, the third *They shall know of the doctrine*. This last, although it has a queer name, is a very useful rod. Without these helps, though the veins were ever so new, you might dig a great while and not strike them. You would be like some of old time, who were *ever learning, but never came to the knowledge of the truth.* They did not take the rod of Humility; if they had, they would have found.

When you have struck the true vein, you will not only find, as I have told you before, that the gold is purer than you expected,

but that no one, if you take proper care, can rob you of it. It is a sure possession. The fire can make no impression upon it, only to make it shine the brighter. The water cannot dim its lustre. If you sink it to the bottom of the sea, it will illumine the depths all around it. If the storms beat upon it, it laughs at their fury. If the whirlwinds sweep over it, it remains firm as the pillars of the earth — and firmer, too; for, when the last trumpet shall sound, and the earth shall be burned up, it shall remain, unmoved and untarnished. Those who possess it can lie down at night and sleep without fear of being robbed and murdered before morning. There are no thorns in their pillows. They have the promise of him who first taught them where to search,

and who first guided their hands to the precious treasure, that no one shall be able to wrest it from them. Relying on this promise, they rejoice with thankfulness, with none to molest or make them afraid.

This treasure will do great things for him who possesses it. It will despoil Care of his wrinkles. Though it may not rob Pain of his sting, yet it will do a good deal towards it, by teaching the sufferer how to bear it with patience. It will rob Death of its terror, and the Grave of its gloom. The treasure of which I first spoke is all piled up at the grave's mouth. Its possessor must part with it there. He cannot take a dollar along with him; and if he could, it would not pass at the gate of heaven. But this treasure stays not this side the grave;

it goes with its owner down through the valley of the shadow of death, and lights his way along. Its weight will not sink him in Jordan's waves, but bears him up on its swelling billows. It is current at the gate of the Celestial City.

And now, in which of these mines will you prefer to dig? The gold of one perishes with the using, that of the other endures forever. One makes the heavy heart heavier, the other makes the tongue of the dumb to sing; one is apt to carry the curse of God along with it, the other insures his blessing; one has in its train the sons and daughters of pride, and pleasure, and worldly honor — *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;* the other is attended by Humility and all the

Christian graces. The one looks to this world, and fits its votaries for high places here; the other for a crown of glory and a seat in heaven. Which will you seek?

"COME UNTO ME, ALL YE THAT LABOR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST."

WHO is he that says, "Come unto me"? It is he that was born in a manger — was once a child, then a youth, and then a man; who lived in Judea, and went about doing good. And, although he never did any thing but good, yet he had many enemies. He was despised and rejected of men, and finally died, nailed to the cross.

What is his name that he should say, "Come unto me"? His name is Jesus Christ, the Son of man, the Man of sorrows. Is he greater and stronger than my father, or

more gentle and loving than my mother? Can he protect and provide for me better than they, that I should go to him? Yes, he is greater than your father; for he is not only the Son of man, but the Son of God. He was not only born in a manger, but he is from everlasting; not only a man doing good all the time he was on the earth, but the mighty God, the everlasting Father; not only a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, but the Lord of glory. Yes, he is more gentle, and kind, and better able to provide for your wants, than your mother; for he not only died on the cross to save you, but he has gone up to heaven to intercede for you, and prepare mansions, glorious mansions, for all who love him. Though a woman may forget her sucking child, yet he will never forget thee, if thou

wilt consent to be his child and obey his commandments. He is also better able than thy mother to provide for thee, since all her strength comes from him. His name is, *The Lord will provide.* Therefore there is reason enough why you should listen to his kind invitation.

But whom does he mean by *all ye that labor and are heavy laden?* I am too young to labor much, and I carry no burdens. Ah, is it so? Then the invitation is not for thee, and thou hast no Savior. He died for others, but not for thee. But let us see whether you do not labor — whether you are not heavy laden. How old art thou? Dost know who made thee — who died for thee? Has thy teacher never talked with thee about these things? Hast thou ever heard about sin, how it is that abomi-

nable thing which God hates? Hast thou ever thought a wicked thought, or done a wrong thing? Hast thou ever done a thing which thy conscience, that something within, told thee not to do? Ah, I see the red mark of guilt upon thy face. Thou art the child that hast done it. Tell me, then, didst thou not labor to forget that wrong thing? Didst thou not chide with that monitor within because he would keep telling thee of it? Didst thou not labor to hide it from thy father, or mother, or thy mates? And was it not a burden to you? Did you not feel as if a great weight was upon you wherever you went? Did you not try to shake it off, and could not? Do you not remember the time when God spoke to you in his holy book, and said, "Thou shalt love me with all thine heart,

and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength," and conscience said, "You have not done it"? Do you not remember when the Lord asked you, as he did Peter, "Lovest thou me? lovest thou me? lovest thou me?" and you were afraid to answer the question as he did? And afterwards you were heavy hearted, and labored to throw off the load and be gay and thoughtless again, but could not, until you had put that inward troubler to sleep. O, there is nothing so heavy as sin! Nothing makes the heart so heavy. Even such a man as Paul was once so burdened by it that he cried out, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Say, hast thou not had some experience of the weight of sin? Are you not one of those whom Christ meant when

he said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden"? Yes, thou art the child who art heavy laden. Thou hast sinned against God; for thou hast not obeyed all his commandments. Thou art burdened with sin; for thou hast not loved thy Savior with all thine heart. He told thee to love those that hated thee; but thou hast not done it. He told you to pray for those who despitefully used you; but you have not done it. Instead of loving and praying for those who hated you and persecuted you, you have done the opposite thing; you have hated them, and taken it upon yourself to punish them. He told thee to lay up treasures in heaven; but thou hast not thought of heaven. All that thou hast done is to lay up treasures on earth. Its gold, its pleasures, its amusements, its

shows, its follies, — these have been thy treasures, — these have been the things which thou hast prized above holiness and heaven. He told you to seek heaven first; but you have not sought heaven at all. He told you to try to please him in all that you did; but instead of this you have only lived to please yourself. He told you not to covet the things of others, but be content with what he has seen fit to give to you; but, alas! how covetous, how discontented, how fretful you have been! Are you not, then, a sinner? You are burdened with sin; for when the Holy One came to you and offered to open your eyes that you might see what a sinner you were, you would not let him. You were not willing to know how bad you were. And when he offered to convert you, give you

a new heart, carry you to Jesus, fit you for heaven, you would not consent. You said to Him, — ah, you dared to say it to the Holy One himself, — "*Go thy way; go thy way.* I cannot attend to thee now." Is it not so? When your minister, the other day, was preaching about the necessity of repentance, and the danger of delay, and the terrible punishment which would come upon those who died in their sins, something within said, "Repent, now; be a Christian, now." It was the voice of the Holy One; but you replied, "When I am older, when I am grown up, I will attend to these things." And are you not a sinner for doing this? O, what a burden is already upon thy soul! And it is growing heavier and heavier every day. How can you doubt that Christ means you, when he says, "Come unto me, ye that are heavy laden"?

"What does he mean when he says, *Come* unto me? What is it to come to Christ? How can I go to him whom I have not seen?" How do you go to your father, whom you *have* seen, when you have offended him? How ought you to go? How do you go to your mother when you wish her to do something for you? You find no difficulty in understanding this. Your Savior is as really alive, as really present, as your father or mother. If you speak to him, he can hear you as well as they. And more: if you think to him, if you ask him to do any thing for you, without uttering your request aloud, he can hear you. Then you can go to him, though you cannot see him with your outer eye. To go to him aright, you must go sorrowing for your sins, believing that he is able and willing to lift

off the burden from your soul, to forgive your sins, to save you from perdition. It is to throw yourself into his arms for protection — it is to choose him and love him as your Savior. This is what he would have you do when he says, "*Come unto me.*"

"What does he mean when he says, 'and I will give you *rest*'? What rest? Where shall I rest? When shall I rest? How shall I rest?" First, it is Christ's rest; such a rest as God can give; not the world's rest; a rest not disturbed by fear; a rest which is sweet to the weary; a rest which he who has found it will never grow tired of. In the second place, the rest is in the bosom of thy Savior; rest in thine own soul; rest in this world; rest in heaven. Thirdly, rest the moment you go to Christ.

He is not slack concerning his promise. When you repent of sin, when you trust in Jesus Christ for pardon and salvation, when you love him instead of the world,—yes, the moment you go to him,—that moment you shall have rest. Fourthly, the rest will be found as you found it in your father when you were in danger, and he came and put his protecting arm around you, or as when you put yourself under the care of a faithful and skilful pilot. You banished your fears, because you trusted in their ability to protect you. That is how you will find rest in Christ, if you will only go to him.

And now that I have told you who it is that calls you to him; who are meant by those that labor and are heavy laden, what it is to come to Christ, and what sort of a

rest it is which he offers to those who come; and now that I have shown you what you knew before, that you were a sinner, and that the Lord had reason to be angry with you, I ask you a solemn, a momentous question: What wilt thou do? Child, what *wilt thou do?* Wilt thou put off repentance till thou art older? Why put off? Thy Savior says to thee, *now*, "*Come unto me.*" Not to-morrow, not when you are older and more wicked than you now are. *What wilt thou do?* It is time thy mind was made up. Every hour thy prospect for heaven darkens. If you ever intend to be a Christian, it is time to begin; if you ever intend to go to Christ, it is high time now.

Come to Jesus, child of sorrow,
Burdened with sin's crushing weight;
Say not, "I will come to-morrow;"
Then, perchance, 'twill be too late.

Say not, "I will come to-morrow;"
There is danger in delay,
Care and sickness, death and sorrow —
What thou wouldst do, do to-day.

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From the Christian Watchman.

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